



EUROPEAN RUGBY  
CHALLENGE  
— CUP —

2018/19 SEASON  
SEMI-FINALS REVIEW



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## Fixtures

Date	Time	Stage		Venue	Referee
10/05/2018	19:45	Final	ASM Clermont Auvergne v La Rochelle	St James' Park, Newcastle	TBA

## Media Accreditation – 2019 Newcastle finals

Applications for media accreditation for the 2019 Heineken Champions Cup and Challenge Cup finals at St James' Park can be made from tomorrow (Tuesday 23 April). All applications will be processed via the EPCR online accreditation system <http://accreditation.epcrugby.com>

The deadline for applications from photographers as well as print, online, radio and non-rights TV media is Thursday 2 May at 5.00pm. No late applications will be considered.

Due to anticipated heavy demand for accreditation for both finals, you are advised to register your application as soon as possible. Successful applicants will be contacted by email with details of the accreditation collection point and full match-day operations.

*(Please also check your junk/spam email folder for a reply)*

For further information / assistance please contact:

[accreditation@epcrugby.com](mailto:accreditation@epcrugby.com) or call Laura Tarbouriech on 0041 799 300 183

### CHALLENGE CUP FINAL

Friday 10 May

ASM CLERMONT AUVERGNE v LA ROCHELLE

St James' Park, Newcastle (19.45)

### HEINEKEN CHAMPIONS CUP FINAL

Saturday 11 May

LEINSTER RUGBY v SARACENS

St James' Park, Newcastle (17.00)



## Key information

- This accreditation application process is for written, photographic, online, radio and non-rights TV media.
- Please note only bona fide working journalists / photographers / broadcasters will be considered.
- Submission of an Accreditation application does not guarantee match accreditation. EPCR may grant or reject an application for accreditation at its absolute discretion and after imposing such further terms as it sees fit.
- Submission of an Accreditation application form will be seen as acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of EPCR and relevant governing bodies.
- Accreditation of photographers is restricted to those photographers, or recognised photographic agencies, who are employed by, or specifically supplying, recognised rugby, sporting or news publications.
- Freelance photographers will be accommodated where possible at the discretion of EPCR.

## Information for those who request multiple accreditations

- If you choose the Sports Desk Administrator category at the initial registration stage, you can accredit multiple staff quickly and easily. At the point of registration choose 'Sports Desk Administrator' on the drop down menu under 'Media Category' then follow the instructions to register your staff.
- Once approved you can log on to your account and select the relevant semi-final you wish to attend from the link on the left hand side of the page. Select the staff members you wish to be accredited from the drop down menu and follow the on-screen instructions. Please note you are then responsible for passing on all relevant accreditation information to your staff.

NB For Sports Desk / Photo Desk administrators filling out Multiple Request forms for newspapers and major agencies, please ensure that individual details, rather than those of the newspaper or agency, are included to ensure any email reaches the correct destination.



## Notes

- The clash of ASM Clermont Auvergne and La Rochelle in Newcastle next month will be the sixth all-French Challenge Cup final in history. The last was in 2012 when Biarritz Olympique defeated RC Toulon at The Twickenham Stoop.
- Clermont will be aiming to lift the trophy for a third time while La Rochelle, who will be playing in their first European final, could become the eighth French club to win the title (Clermont 1999, 2007; Bourgoin 1997, Colomiers 1998, Pau 2000, Biarritz Olympique 2012, Montpellier 2016, Stade Francais Paris 2017).
- Clermont are through to a fourth final equalling the appearance record of Bath Rugby, Gloucester Rugby and Harlequins.
- The aggregate attendance of 33,923 for the semi-finals was up 50% on last season.
- La Rochelle centre, Geoffrey Doumayrou, was a Challenge Cup winner with Stade Francais Paris when they defeated Gloucester in the 2017 final.
- Following Saturday's victory over Harlequins, Clermont have now won all four tournament semi-finals they've played at Stade Marcel-Michelin.
- Benjamin Kayser could make his sixth appearance in a European final next month. The Clermont hooker has played in five European Cup finals with Stade Francais Paris, Leicester Tigers and Clermont, and has yet to win one.
- La Rochelle's Ihaia West has kicked the most penalties in the tournament to date this season with 10.
- Clermont's Camille Lopez became the third player to land two drop goals in a Challenge Cup semi-final. The previous two are Jonny Wilkinson for RC Toulon against Stade Francais Paris in 2012 and Jules Plisson for Stade Francais in the same match.
- Clermont's Greig Laidlaw won the Challenge Cup in 2015 with Gloucester when they defeated Edinburgh Rugby in the final while Morgan Parra was on the losing side with Bourgoin in the 2009 decider against Northampton Saints.
- Jean-Charles Orioli of La Rochelle has three Heineken Champions Cup winner's medals from his time at RC Toulon.
- If Peter Betham scores for Clermont in the final at St James' Park, he will break Tom Varndell's record of 10 tries in a Challenge Cup season set in 2009/10.
- Sale Sharks twin back rowers, Tom and Ben Curry, made 35 tackles between them in the narrow defeat at La Rochelle. Sale captain, Jono Ross, also made 16, the same total as Tom Curry.
- Try scorer, Damian Penaud, made 107 metres in Clermont's win against Harlequins.



## 2018/19 Challenge Cup – Semi-finals Top Performers

Defenders beaten: Alivereti Raka (ASM Clermont Auvergne), Mike Brown (Harlequins), Gregory Alldritt (La Rochelle), Luke James (Sale Sharks) - 5

Breaks: Damian Penaud (ASM Clermont Auvergne), Chris Ashton (Sale Sharks) - 4

Offloads: Setariki Tuicuvu (ASM Clermont Auvergne), Sitaleki Timani (ASM Clermont Auvergne), Damian Penaud (ASM Clermont Auvergne), Geoffrey Doumayrou (La Rochelle), Francis Saili (Harlequins), Sam James (Sale Sharks) - 2

Metres: Damian Penaud (ASM Clermont Auvergne) - 107

Carries: Setariki Tuicuvu (ASM Clermont Auvergne) - 14

Turnovers: Semi Kunatani (Harlequins) - 4

Tackles: Chris Robshaw (Harlequins) - 20

Lineout steals: Mathieu Tanguy (La Rochelle), Arthur Iturria (ASM Clermont Auvergne), Sebastien Vahaamahina (ASM Clermont Auvergne) - 1



## Reaction

"We played pretty well. We have a saying about 'gold medal moments' and there were two in the 22 where we knocked the ball on off a lineout. At semi-final level they are the difference between winning and losing. We're a bit disappointed, but I can't fault the lads. What we did right was to get within four points. We took the penalty 10 minutes out, but La Rochelle are a very good side and we played into their hands a little bit with their big forwards. Overall La Rochelle were too powerful, but ultimately I'm very proud of the performance. La Rochelle have got a strong squad, but we're excited about where we're going and we think we've got our recruitment right for next season. We've got seven or eight internationals joining us and that will help in competitions like this. The Challenge Cup has been fantastic for us. To get to the semi-final and just miss out on the final means we can be very proud."

Steve Diamond, Sale Sharks Director of Rugby; La Rochelle 24-20 Sale Sharks

"We will enjoy tonight, but the job is not done yet. We have to nurse these aching bodies and get ready for the final. We weren't disciplined and they capitalised early, but our boys pulled through in the end. Our defence was excellent."

Victor Vito, La Rochelle captain; La Rochelle 24-20 Sale Sharks

"We have a chance to play in a final. That's very good for the club, the squad and the town, but we haven't won anything. It's always terrible to lose a final, so the aim is to win. Now we're going to work hard to make this a great season."

Jean-Charles Orioli, La Rochelle hooker; La Rochelle 24-20 Sale Sharks

"As a coach, we're really proud of the effort and there's a lot of lessons we can take from there. You have to be positive – our defence was exceptional. This is a team that averages six tries at home – and has been unbeaten at home for a long period of time. They scored eight tries against Northampton last time and just two against us – and both of those came from missed tackles. Our system and our shape was good – the enthusiasm and energy from our defence was exceptional, and we scored four. We're hurting because that's a game we could have won, but we'll take the positives out of it. I'm sure the fans will be proud that we went toe-to-toe with a European heavyweight and the journey we've been on – from almost getting relegated last season – shows the progress that's being made. Unfortunately we fell short by small margins – we started really well but our lineout hasn't been functioning to the level it has been over the last month. It meant we couldn't sustain momentum or put pressure on them – and ultimately, the second try of the game came from a lost lineout."

Paul Gustard, Harlequins Head of Rugby; ASM Clermont Auvergne 32-27 Harlequins

"It was all about winning tonight. It wasn't the greatest finish by giving Harlequins too much space, but we're in the final. It should be a good game. We have had a few good tussles with them this season, but there can only be one winner and we hope that can be us."

Greig Laidlaw, ASM Clermont Auvergne scrum-half; ASM Clermont Auvergne 32-27 Harlequins



## La Rochelle 24-20 Sale Sharks

### Match Summary

Saturday, 20 April 2019

Kick-off: 18:30

Stade Marcel Deflandre

Referee: Nigel Owens (Wal), Assistant ref: Ben Whitehouse (Wal), Assistant ref: Ian Davies (Wal), TMO: Olly Hodges (Ire), Citing Commissioner: Eugene Ryan (Ire)

LA ROCHELLE: Kini Murimurivalu; Vincent Rattez, Geoffrey Doumayrou, Levani Botia, Arthur Retiere; Ihaia West, Alexis Balès; Dany Priso, Jean Charles Orioli, Uini Atonio, Romain Sazy, Mathieu Tanguy, Wian Liebenberg, Gregory Alldritt, Victor Vito  
Replacements: Pierre Bourgarit, Vincent Péló, Arthur Joly, Thomas Jolmes, Kevin Gourdon, Thomas Berjon, Maxime Lafage, Jules Favre

Tries: Penalty Try (23), Kini Murimurivalu (25), Gregory Alldritt (50)

Conversions: Ihaia West (27, 52)

Penalty Goals: Ihaia West (16)

Drop Goals:

Yellow Cards: Victor Vito (13), Jules Favre (80+1)

Red Cards:

Replacements: Thomas Jolmes for Mathieu Tanguy (57), Kevin Gourdon for Wian Liebenberg (59), Jules Favre for Vincent Rattez (62), Thomas Berjon for Alexis Balès (62), Pierre Bourgarit for Jean Charles Orioli (64), Vincent Péló for Dany Priso (68), Arthur Joly for Uini Atonio (69), Maxime Lafage for Kini Murimurivalu (74)

SALE SHARKS: Luke James; Denny Solomona, Sam James, James O'Connor, Chris Ashton; AJ MacGinty, Faf de Klerk; Ross Harrison, Rob Webber, WillGriff John, Josh Beaumont, James Phillips, Ben Curry, Tom Curry, Jonathan Ross

Replacements: Curtis Langdon, Tom Bristow, Joe Jones, Matt Postlethwaite, Sam Moore, Will Cliff, Cameron Redpath, Arron Reed

Tries: Penalty Try (13), Chris Ashton (33)

Conversions: AJ MacGinty (34)

Penalty Goals: AJ MacGinty (20, 68)

Drop Goals:

Yellow Cards: Denny Solomona (23)

Red Cards:

Replacements: Curtis Langdon for Rob Webber (68), Matt Postlethwaite for James Phillips (68), Tom Bristow for Ross Harrison (74), Arron Reed for Luke James (78)

Attendance: 16,000

Man of the Match: Gregory Alldritt (La Rochelle)





## ASM Clermont Auvergne 32-27 Harlequins

### Match Summary

Saturday, 20 April 2019

Kick-off: 21:00

Stade Marcel-Michelin

Referee: John Lacey (Ire), Assistant ref: Andrew Brace (Ire), Assistant ref: George Clancy (Ire), TMO: Simon McDowell (Ire), Citing Commissioner: Tim Lowry (Ire)

ASM CLERMONT AUVERGNE: Setariki Tuicuvu; Damian Penaud, George Moala, Wesley Fofana, Alivereti Raka; Camille Lopez, Morgan Parra; Etienne Falgoux, Benjamin Kayser, Rabah Slimani, Sitaleki Timani, Sebastien Vahaamahina, Arthur Iturria, Alexandre Lapandry, Fritz Lee  
Replacements: John Ulugia, Beqa Kakabadze, Michael Simutoga, Paul Jedrasiak, Damien Chouly, Greig Laidlaw, Tim Nanai-Williams, Peter Betham

Tries: Fritz Lee (31), Damian Penaud (35)

Conversions: Morgan Parra (33, 36)

Penalty Goals: Morgan Parra (28, 40+3, 47, 54)

Drop Goals: Camille Lopez (9, 25)

Yellow Cards:

Red Cards:

Replacements: Beqa Kakabadze for Etienne Falgoux (31), Etienne Falgoux for Beqa Kakabadze (40), Damien Chouly for Fritz Lee (43), Michael Simutoga for Rabah Slimani (52), Beqa Kakabadze for Etienne Falgoux (60), John Ulugia for Benjamin Kayser (60), Paul Jedrasiak for Alexandre Lapandry (60), Greig Laidlaw for Morgan Parra (63), Peter Betham for George Moala (63)

HARLEQUINS: Mike Brown; Ross Chisholm, Alofa Alofa, Ben Tapuai, Charlie Walker; Marcus Smith, Sam Hidalgo-Clyne; Joe Marler, Rob Buchanan, Kyle Sinckler, Matt Symons, Ben Glynn, Jack Clifford, Chris Robshaw, Alex Dombrandt

Replacements: Elia Elia, Nick Auterac, Josh Ibeanokpe, Stan South, Semi Kunatani, Niall Saunders, James Lang, Francis Saili

Tries: Mike Brown (38), Chris Robshaw (57), James Lang (65), Alex Dombrandt (79)

Conversions: Marcus Smith (58, 66)

Penalty Goals: Marcus Smith (12)

Drop Goals:

Yellow Cards:

Red Cards:

Replacements: Nick Auterac for Joe Marler (20), Joe Marler for Nick Auterac (29), Stan South for Ben Glynn (40), Elia Elia for Rob Buchanan (40), Francis Saili for Ben Tapuai (48), Semi Kunatani for Jack Clifford (54), Nick Auterac for Joe Marler (63), James Lang for Alofa Alofa (63), Josh Ibeanokpe for Kyle Sinckler (70), Niall Saunders for Sam Hidalgo-Clyne (77)

Attendance: 17,923

Man of the Match: Morgan Parra (ASM Clermont Auvergne)

## 2018/19 Challenge Cup - Leading Scorers

### Points

Rank			Matches	Points	Penalties	Conversions	Drop Goals	Tries
1	Carlo Canna	Zebre Rugby Club	6	59	5	12	0	4
1	Marcus Smith	Harlequins	8	59	8	15	0	1
3	Callum Sheedy	Bristol Bears	7	55	3	23	0	0
4	Ihaia West	La Rochelle	7	53	10	9	0	1
5	Peter Betham	ASM Clermont Auvergne	8	50	0	0	0	10
6	Maxime Lafage	La Rochelle	5	49	0	22	0	1
7	Faf de Klerk	Sale Sharks	7	45	6	11	0	1
8	Chris Ashton	Sale Sharks	6	40	0	0	0	8
9	Patricio Fernandez	ASM Clermont Auvergne	5	39	0	17	0	1
10	Lucas Meret	Bordeaux-Bègles	6	38	6	10	0	0
10	Greig Laidlaw	ASM Clermont Auvergne	6	38	2	16	0	0
10	James Grayson	Northampton Saints	4	38	0	19	0	0

### Tries

Rank			Matches	Tries
1	Peter Betham	ASM Clermont Auvergne	8	10
2	Chris Ashton	Sale Sharks	6	8
3	Alex Mitchell	Northampton Saints	6	7
4	Andy Uren	Bristol Bears	6	6
4	Tom Pincus	Bristol Bears	7	6
6	Apisai Naqalevu	ASM Clermont Auvergne	6	5
6	Gregory Alldritt	La Rochelle	7	5
6	Iliesa Ratuva	Benetton Rugby	4	5
6	Kyle Godwin	Connacht Rugby	6	5
6	Ollie Sleightholme	Northampton Saints	2	5
6	Peceli Yato	ASM Clermont Auvergne	4	5
6	Ryan Edwards	Bristol Bears	3	5
6	Tom Howe	Worcester Warriors	6	5

### Goalkicking %

Rank			Matches	Penalties	Conversions	Attempts*	%
1	Patricio Fernandez	ASM Clermont Auvergne	5	0	17	17	100%
1	Sam Davies	Ospreys	4	4	7	11	100%
3	Josh Lewis	Dragons	5	1	14	16	94%
4	Morné Steyn	Stade Français Paris	4	2	7	10	90%
5	Maxime Lafage	La Rochelle	5	0	22	25	88%
6	Greig Laidlaw	ASM Clermont Auvergne	6	2	16	21	86%
7	Lucas Meret	Bordeaux-Bègles	6	6	10	19	84%
8	James Grayson	Northampton Saints	4	0	19	23	83%
9	Marcus Smith	Harlequins	8	8	15	28	82%
10	Antoine Hastoy	Pau	6	3	5	10	80%

\* 10+ attempts

## 2018/19 Challenge Cup - Top Performers

### Carries

Rank			Matches	Carries
1	Piers O'Connor	Bristol Bears	6	86
2	Gregory Alldritt	La Rochelle	7	81
3	Mikheil Gachechiladze	Enisei-STM	6	80
4	Peter Betham	ASM Clermont Auvergne	8	75
5	Apisai Naqalevu	ASM Clermont Auvergne	6	73
6	Jonathan Ross	Sale Sharks	6	71
7	Tom Pincus	Bristol Bears	7	68
8	Chris Ashton	Sale Sharks	6	67
9	Matt Cox	Worcester Warriors	6	63
10	Luke James	Sale Sharks	8	62
10	Luther Burrell	Northampton Saints	6	62
10	Mike Brown	Harlequins	6	62

### Metres

Rank			Matches	Metres
1	Peter Betham	ASM Clermont Auvergne	8	624
2	Tom Pincus	Bristol Bears	7	533
3	Piers O'Connor	Bristol Bears	6	517
4	Alivereti Raka	ASM Clermont Auvergne	4	505
5	Chris Ashton	Sale Sharks	6	473
6	Andy Uren	Bristol Bears	6	430
7	Apisai Naqalevu	ASM Clermont Auvergne	6	417
8	Paula Balekana	Zebre Rugby Club	5	413
9	Tom Howe	Worcester Warriors	6	376
10	Tom Collins	Northampton Saints	5	363

### Breaks

Rank			Matches	Breaks
1	Peter Betham	ASM Clermont Auvergne	8	19
2	Tom Pincus	Bristol Bears	7	18
3	Chris Ashton	Sale Sharks	6	13
4	Andy Uren	Bristol Bears	6	12
4	Damian Penaud	ASM Clermont Auvergne	5	12
4	Piers O'Connor	Bristol Bears	6	12
7	Alivereti Raka	ASM Clermont Auvergne	4	11
7	Apisai Naqalevu	ASM Clermont Auvergne	6	11
7	Paula Balekana	Zebre Rugby Club	5	11
7	Ryan Edwards	Bristol Bears	3	11

## Defenders Beaten

Rank			Matches	Defenders Beaten
1	Alivereti Raka	ASM Clermont Auvergne	4	32
2	Apisai Naqalevu	ASM Clermont Auvergne	6	29
2	George Moala	ASM Clermont Auvergne	5	29
4	Peter Betham	ASM Clermont Auvergne	8	26
5	Paula Balekana	Zebre Rugby Club	5	25
5	Piers O'Connor	Bristol Bears	6	25
5	Romarc Camou	La Rochelle	2	25
8	Renato Giammarioli	Zebre Rugby Club	3	24
9	Ryan Edwards	Bristol Bears	3	21
10	Antoine Hastoy	Pau	6	20
10	Lester Etien	Stade Français Paris	5	20
10	Luke James	Sale Sharks	8	20
10	Monty Ioane	Benetton Rugby	5	20

## Offloads

Rank			Matches	Offloads
1	Chris Ashton	Sale Sharks	6	10
1	Facundo Bosch	Agen	4	10
3	Antoine Miquel	Agen	4	9
3	Callum Sheedy	Bristol Bears	7	9
3	Francis Saili	Harlequins	6	9
3	Gregory Alldritt	La Rochelle	7	9
3	Tom Collins	Northampton Saints	5	9
8	Jake Heenan	Bristol Bears	6	8
8	Loris Tolot	Agen	3	8
8	Paula Balekana	Zebre Rugby Club	5	8
8	Taqele Naiyaravoro	Northampton Saints	4	8
8	Tommaso Castello	Zebre Rugby Club	5	8

## Tackles

Rank			Matches	Tackles	Missed Tackles
1	Mikheil Gachechiladze	Enisei-STM	6	128	8
2	Jonathan Ross	Sale Sharks	6	89	6
3	Ben Curry	Sale Sharks	8	88	8
4	Jessy Jegerlhener	Agen	5	76	8
5	Mathieu De Giovanni	Stade Français Paris	5	74	6
6	James Connolly	Connacht Rugby	7	72	3
6	Olly Cracknell	Ospreys	5	72	3
8	Gregory Alldritt	La Rochelle	7	70	11
8	Romain Sazy	La Rochelle	7	70	8
10	Ross Harrison	Sale Sharks	8	69	8

## Lineouts

Rank			Matches	Lineouts Won (inc. steals)	Lineout Steals
1	Josh Beaumont	Sale Sharks	6	39	1
2	Cameron Woki	Bordeaux-Bègles	6	38	6
3	Arthur Iturria	ASM Clermont Auvergne	6	35	4
4	James King	Ospreys	5	30	2
5	Clement Ancely	Grenoble	5	27	4
5	Francois Uys	Grenoble	5	27	3
7	Romain Sazy	La Rochelle	7	26	6
8	Bryn Evans	Sale Sharks	6	24	1
8	Jonathan Ross	Sale Sharks	6	24	1
10	Lewis Evans	Dragons	3	23	0

## Turnovers

Rank			Matches	Turnovers
1	Peceli Yato	ASM Clermont Auvergne	4	9
2	Hendre Stassen	Stade Français Paris	3	7
2	Semi Kunatani	Harlequins	5	7
2	Tom Curry	Sale Sharks	7	7
5	Alex Dombrandt	Harlequins	5	6
5	Etienne Falgoux	ASM Clermont Auvergne	5	6
5	Julien Blanc	Pau	5	6
5	Levani Botia	La Rochelle	5	6
5	Piers O'Connor	Bristol Bears	6	6
5	Victor Vito	La Rochelle	5	6